

to do this is to raise the minimum wage. We know that hunger is a subset of poverty. If people earned enough money, they wouldn't need help making ends meet. They wouldn't need Medicaid, SNAP, or housing assistance. The Federal minimum wage is currently \$7.25 and hasn't been raised in 5 years. The real value of today's minimum wage is less than two-thirds of what it was in 1968. The result of such a low minimum wage is that many full-time workers live in poverty and have to rely on public assistance programs in order to make ends meet.

Now, I am a cosponsor of the bill to raise the Federal minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. Doing so wouldn't just result in increased wages for American workers, although that is the most important result. Raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 would cut SNAP spending by \$4.6 billion a year—\$4.6 billion a year.

That is an amazing figure, Mr. Speaker, and that reduction in spending comes simply because people would earn enough money to buy their own food. Imagine that. By increasing people's wages, we reduce the number of people relying on Federal assistance.

A recent study commissioned by the Center for American Progress documents this. It shows that SNAP benefits decline 30 cents for every \$1 increase in family earnings. This report goes on to show that a 10 percent increase in the minimum wage reduces SNAP enrollment by between 2.4 percent and 3.2 percent and reduces SNAP spending by 1.9 percent. That means that 3.5 million Americans would be cut from SNAP not because of some arbitrary or hurtful policy but because they earn enough so they don't need SNAP any longer.

Mr. Speaker, this is just good, plain common sense. We should be doing more to bridge the income inequality gap. We should be doing everything we can to make sure that people are earning as much as they can so that they do not need to rely on Federal programs like SNAP or Medicaid.

And, quite frankly, we shouldn't be talking about a minimum wage, Mr. Speaker. We should be talking about a living wage. Just look at my hometown of Worcester, Massachusetts. The minimum wage is \$8 an hour. But a living wage for two childless adults is just under \$15 an hour, and it rises to \$18.30 for two adults with one child. Now, while I support an increase in minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour, that is not going to cut it for a family of three.

That is why I am encouraged by what the city of Seattle has done. They responsibly raised their minimum wage to \$15 an hour, an increase phased in over the next 6 years. That is essentially the average national living wage. While I believe our effort to raise the Federal minimum wage to \$10.10 is a good one and is the right policy, I believe we need to think bigger and bolder. Seattle passed its increase with the

blessing and approval from both labor and business groups. That is an amazing coalition.

Mr. Speaker, raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do. It is the moral thing to do. And it will actually have real impacts on the lives of poor families living in this country. It will cut SNAP spending by \$4.6 billion per year, and 3.5 million people will be able to stop relying on SNAP simply because they are earning more in every paycheck they take home. It will help end hunger now. This is a good, commonsense way to reduce SNAP spending and make people's lives better.

We should increase the minimum wage today. I call on the Republican leadership to schedule a vote. Increasing the minimum wage is the right thing to do. If we want to end hunger now, we need to make sure that people who work ought not to have to live in poverty.

APEX HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the honor of attending the Apex High School graduation ceremony, where 556 seniors received their diplomas.

I was impressed, Mr. Speaker, to hear about their accomplishments while at Apex High. These seniors played on sports teams that were a part of 18 conference championships and five State championships, including men's basketball, men's and women's lacrosse, volleyball, swimming, and track and field.

Their achievements were not limited to sports. The marching bands, chorus and orchestra, and theater have all been recognized for their talents. The Apex High School DECA club, which prepares students with unique opportunities for leadership and entrepreneurship in future careers, has been recognized statewide and nationally, Mr. Speaker. Apex High's Academy of Information Technology was also named as the top academy in the country by the National Academy Foundation.

The graduating class was outstanding academically, as well, earning over \$3.9 million in scholarships to some of the best universities in the country.

This time of year, Mr. Speaker, there are hundreds of thousands of graduates across the Nation. It is a very special and significant time for many. For these students, this means ending one chapter and beginning a new one. I congratulate all the seniors at Apex High School and across the country on their commendable achievements and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 11 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask Your blessing upon the men and women of this, the people's House. Keep them aware of Your presence as they face the tasks of this day, that no burden be too heavy, no duty too difficult, and no work too wearisome.

Help them, and indeed help us all, to obey Your law, to do Your will, and to walk in Your way. Grant that they might be good in thought, gracious in word, generous in deed, and great in spirit.

Make this a glorious day in which all are glad to be alive, eager to work, and ready to serve You, our great Nation, and all our fellow brothers and sisters.

May all that is done this day be done for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. FOXX led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RETURN TO THE CONSTITUTION

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, over \$1 billion in Federal grants have been wasted on poorly functioning State ObamaCare exchanges, including a reported \$655 million for three exchanges that have been completely shut down. These failed Web sites fit into a long line of government information technology projects that are over budget and underperforming.

Repeated attempts to build an electronic system that would allow the Defense Department and the VA to share